

## Message Text

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15

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /031 W  
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P 070740Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6286

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6624

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US, OVIP, (FORD, GERALD R.)

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS

REF: SEOUL 6536

1. PRESIDENT PARK IS NOW TAKING DIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST IN QUESTION OF WHERE TO QUARTER PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD. AS REPORTED REFTEL, MOFA HAS TENDED TO FAVOR CHOSUN HOTEL. HOWEVER, DURING MOFA BRIEFING ON PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, PRESIDENT PARK SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF PUTTING PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD IN YONGBINKWAN, THE FORMER GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE NOW PRIVATELY OWNED. AT SAME TIME, PRESIDENT INDICATED THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS WERE THE DOMINANT FACTOR AND THAT THE ROKG SIDE SHOULD IN THE END BE GUIDED BY USG DESIRES ON WHERE TO QUARTER THE PRESIDENTIAL PARTY.

2. EMBASSY AND MOFA PROTOCOL OFFICERS HAVE SURVEYED YONGBINKWAN. IT IS AN ATTRACTIVE BUILDING WHICH HAS A SINGLE LARGE VIP SUITE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS. MAJOR PROBLEM WOULD BE THE NEED FOR EXTENSIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS GIVEN THE BUILDING'S LOCATION. SECONDLY, OUTSIDE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE, THE BUILDING, DESPITE ITS SIZE, CONTAINS ONLY TWO SMALL BEDROOMS, THEREFORE, OTHER SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PARTY AS WELL AS SUPPORTING STAFF WOULD HAVE TO BE HOUSED IN ANOTHER LOCATION. ANOTHER CONSIDERATION IS THAT YONGBINKWAN IS REMOVED FROM CENTER

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OF TOWN, THUS ADDING ABOUT FIVE MINUTES DRIVING TIME THROUGH

CITY STREETS FOR ALMOST ALL OF PRESIDENT'S OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES.

3. THE TOWER HOTEL IS ONLY A FEW MINUTES AWAY FROM YONGBINKWAN BUT IS DEFINITELY NOT A FIRST-CLASS FACILITY AND ROOMS THERE CLEARLY NOT ADEQUATE FOR SENIOR MEMBERS OF PARTY AND OTHERS. ALSO DOUBT THAT HOTEL COULD ADEQUATELY ABSORB NUMBER OF PRESS TRAVELING WITH PRESIDENTIAL PARTY. WE SUSPECT THAT IF YONGBINKWAN WERE DECIDED UPON, OFFICIAL US PARTY MIGHT WELL END UP BEING DIVIDED INTO THREE LOCATIONS (YONGBINKWAN FOR PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD; CHOSUN HOTEL FOR OTHER SENIOR MEMBERS OF PARTY; AND TOWER HOTEL FOR SOME OF SUPPORTING STAFF.)

4. IT EMBASSY VIEW THAT MOST PRACTICAL AND COMFORTABLE ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE PUTTING PRESIDENTIAL PARTY IN CHOSUN HOTEL. HOTEL CAN ABSORB ALL OF STAFF AND PROBABLY MOST IF NOT ALL OF TRAVELING PRESS CORPS. SECRET SERVICE AND DEPARTMENT SECURITY OFFICERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH HOTEL FROM SECURITY POINT OF VIEW. (MOFA HAS BEEN GIVING CONSIDERATION TO TAKING OVER WHOLE HOTEL, BUT HOTEL MANAGEMENT TRYING TO CONVINCE KOREANS THIS NOT NECESSARY FROM SECURITY POINT OF VIEW.)

5. IF WE DO NOT QUICKLY INDICATE OUR PREFERENCE TO ROKG, EMBASSY FEARS THAT KOREANS WILL FEEL COMPELLED TO GO AHEAD AND MAKE AT LEAST TENTATIVE DECISION ON QUARTERS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL PARTY ON ITS OWN. CONSEQUENTLY, WOULD RECOMMEND:

A. EMBASSY BE AUTHORIZED INDICATE TO MOFA THAT ADVANCE TEAM FOR PRESIDENTIAL PARTY WOULD BE ARRIVING IN NEAR FUTURE TO ASSIST IN DECISION ON QUARTERS; OR

B. IF THAT NOT POSSIBLE, TELL MOFA THAT WE TEND TO FAVOR CHOSUN HOTEL AS SITE FOR PRESIDENTIAL PARTY.

6. REQUEST EARLY REPLY.  
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